



Just in Time



A Story About Patience



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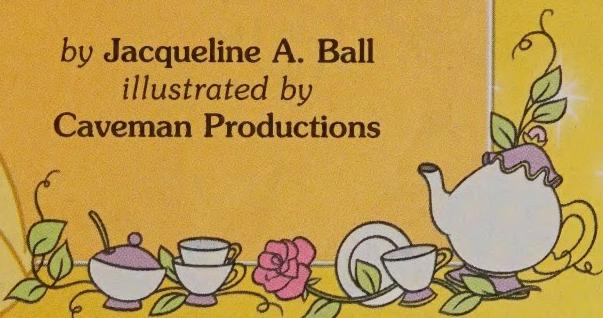
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*A Story About
Patience*

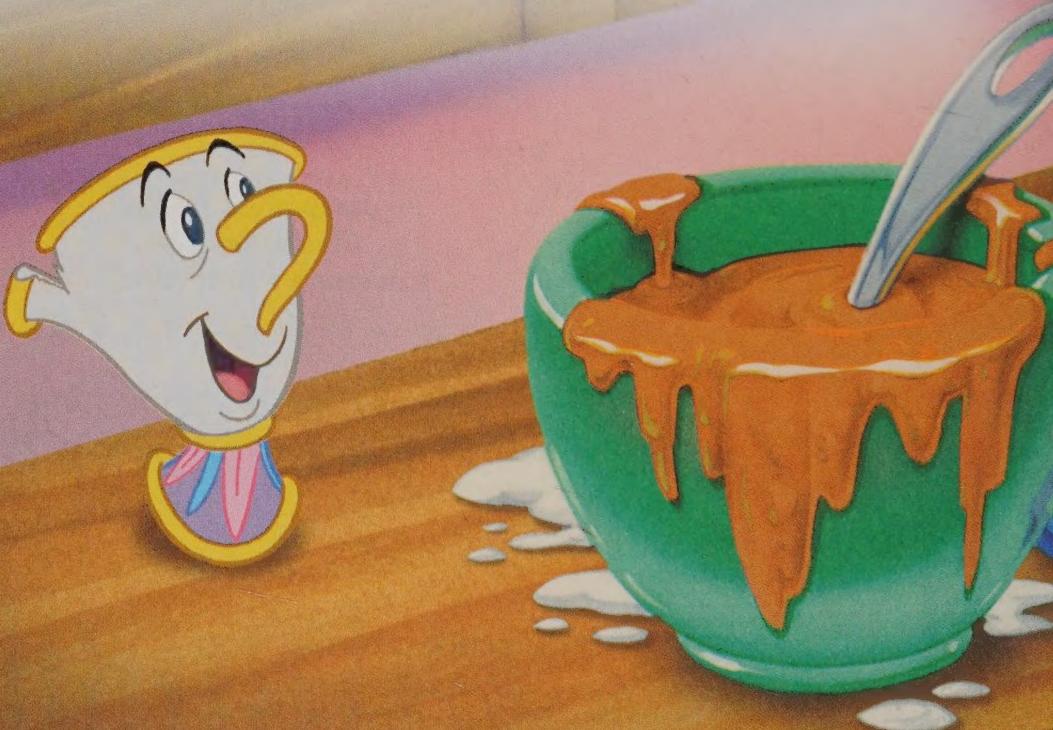
by Jacqueline A. Ball
illustrated by
Caveman Productions



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Outside the Beast's castle, snowflakes swirled.
But in the kitchen, all was warm and cheerful.
"Are the gingersnaps ready yet?" asked Chip.
"No, dear," answered his mother, Mrs. Potts.
"They need time to bake."
Chip frowned. "But I want some now!"



"Now, now," said his mother.
"You must be patient."



"What does *being patient* mean?" Chip asked.
"It means understanding that sometimes you have
to wait," Mrs. Potts answered.



“Perhaps Belle will go outside and play with you until the gingersnaps are ready,” she continued. “We were working on her knitting, but I think she’s in the library now.”

Chip perked up. “All right.”



In the Beast's library, Belle was reading a book. She was at an exciting part when—

“Belle! Belle!” Chip called. He was perched on the arm of her chair.



“Hello, Chip,” Belle said, smiling at the little teacup.

“Belle, can you come out to the barn and play hide-and-seek with me? Please? Please, *please*?”

Belle put down her book. “Of course.”

“Yippee!” cried Chip.



Snowdrifts blocked the path to the barn.
The Beast was clearing it.

“We’ll help you,” Belle called.

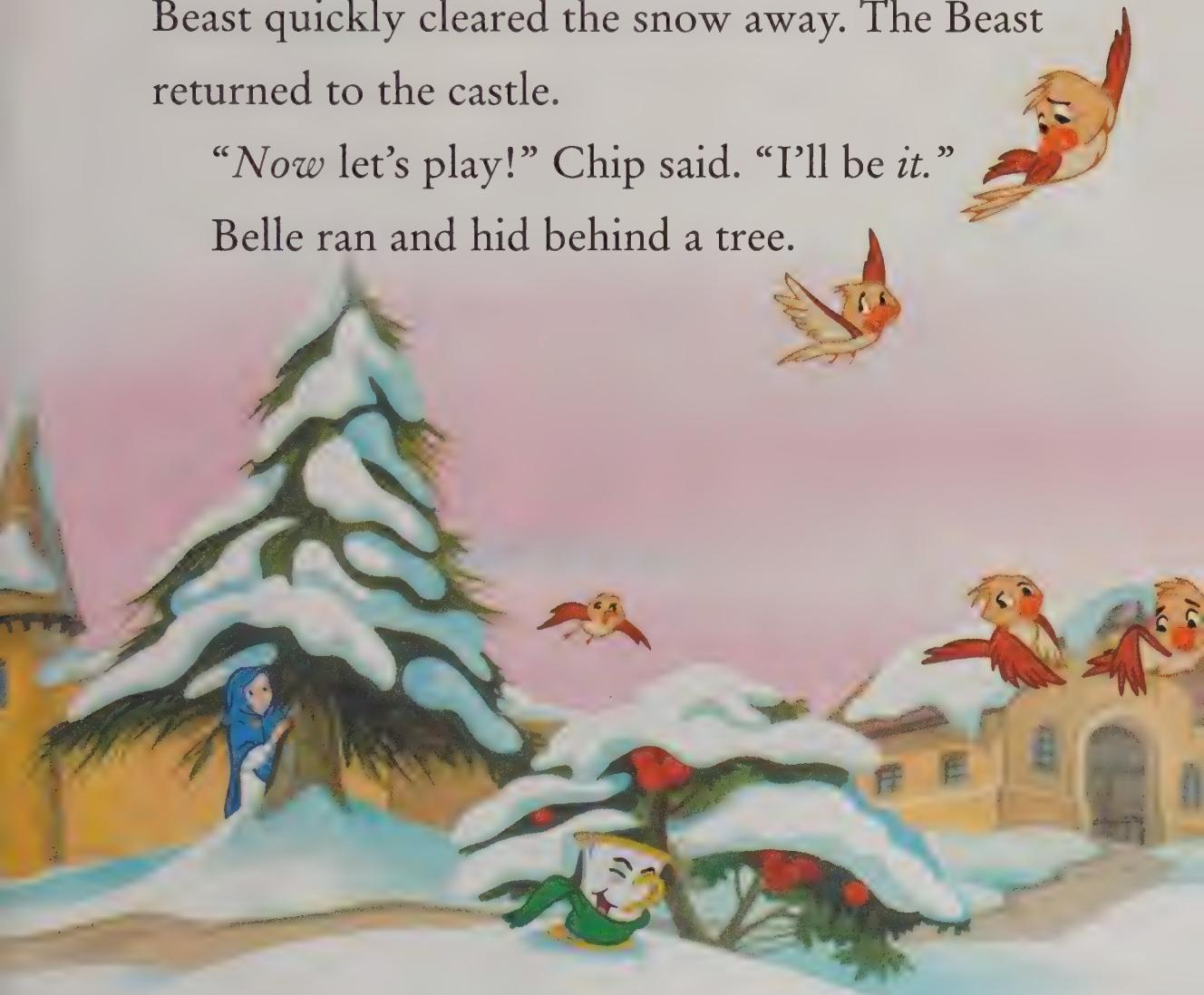
“But I want to play!” Chip complained.

“After the job is done,” she promised.



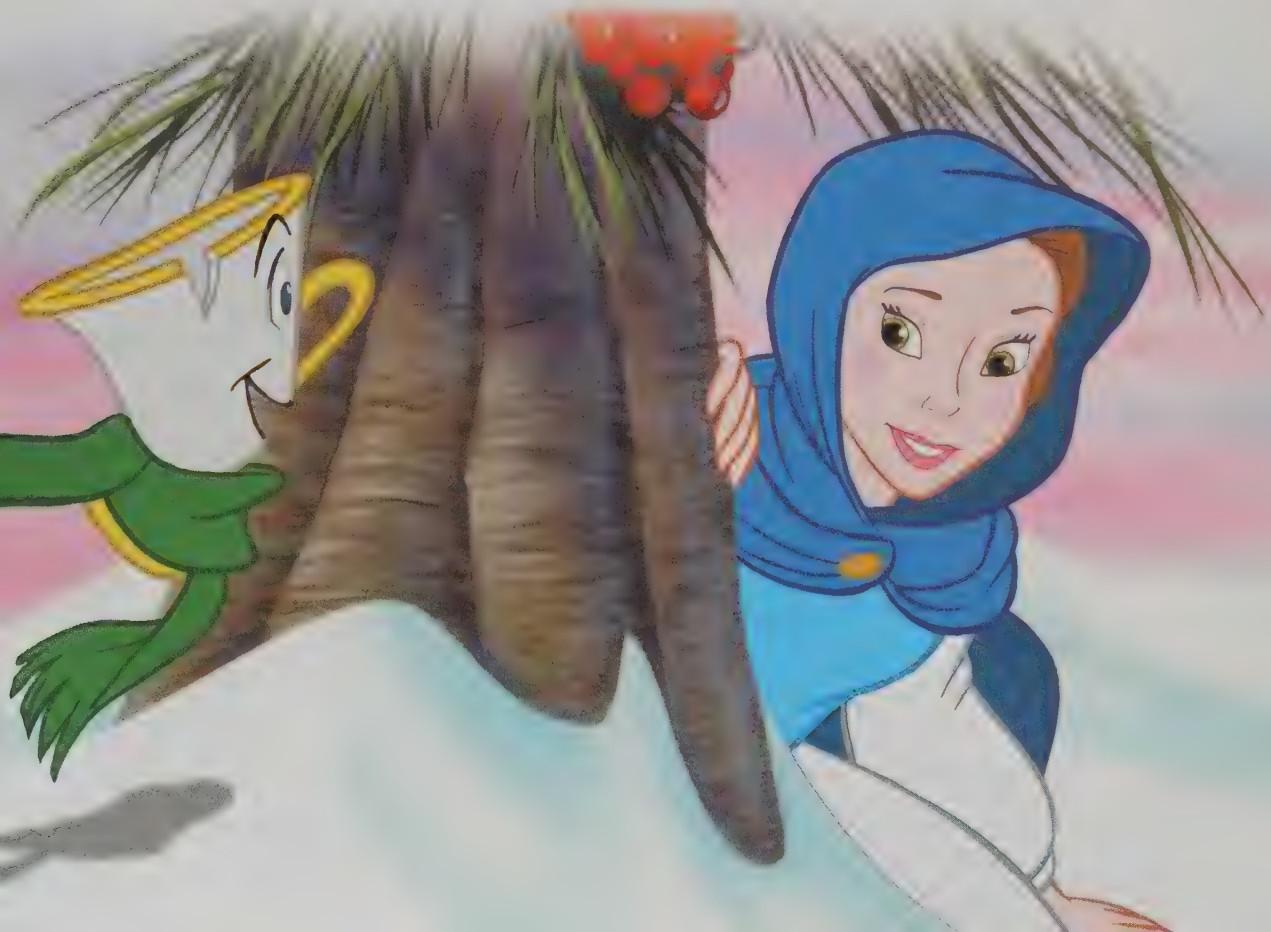
Working together, Chip, Belle, and the Beast quickly cleared the snow away. The Beast returned to the castle.

“Now let’s play!” Chip said. “I’ll be *it*.”
Belle ran and hid behind a tree.



“Found you!” said Chip. “Now you’re it.”

“I have an idea that I want to do first,” Belle said. “Let’s make bird feeders. The birds look hungry. The snow is covering their food.”





“How do we make a bird feeder?” Chip wanted to know.

Belle pulled a ball of red wool out of her pocket. “We can use this. Would you please ask your mother for some honey while I pick some berries?”

*W*hen Chip returned, they dipped pinecones into the honey and stuck berries on them. Then they hung the feeders from a tree. They waited . . . and waited.



“They’ll come,” said Belle. “You have to be—”
“Patient,” finished Chip, sighing. “I know.”
And sure enough, birds soon came.



Chip and Belle went back to their game.
“One, two, three,” Belle counted, “four, five,
six, seven . . .



...Eighteen, nineteen, twenty. Ready or not, here I come!" Belle called.

Chip squeezed through the open barn door. What was that noise? It sounded like a horse, except . . . muffled.



“*N*eigh! Neigh!” came the soft sound.
It was Phillippe, Belle’s horse, and he was
in trouble.

“Belle! Come quick!” Chip shouted.

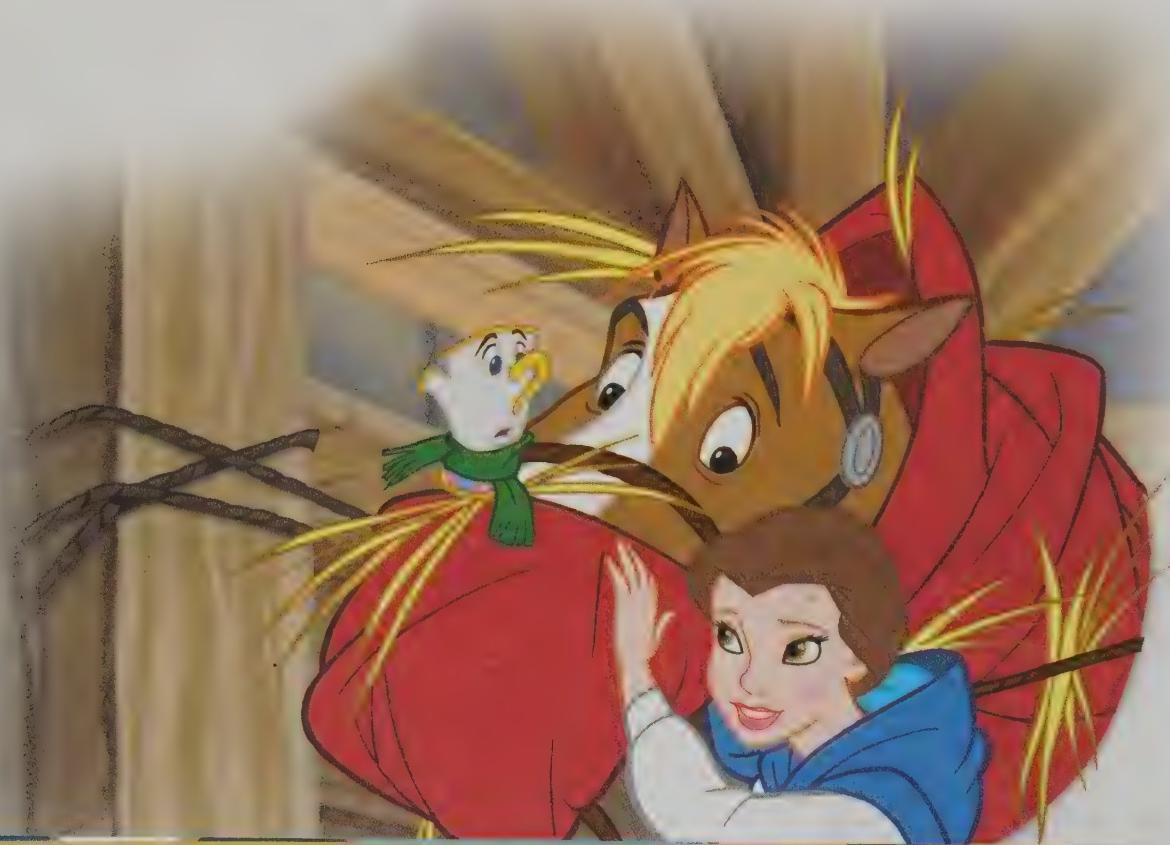


Belle rushed inside and saw Phillippe all tangled up in a rope and blanket. "Oh, my!" exclaimed Belle. "What happened?"



Then Belle remembered. "I was supposed to feed him! I forgot all about it! Phillippe got tangled up trying to reach his food. We need to get help!"

"I know what to do!" said Chip.



*H*e hopped to a rope hanging down from a big bell. Chip jumped up and swung on the rope. *Clang! Clang!* rang the bell.



Hearing the noise, Mrs. Potts came
bounding, spilling tea on her way.

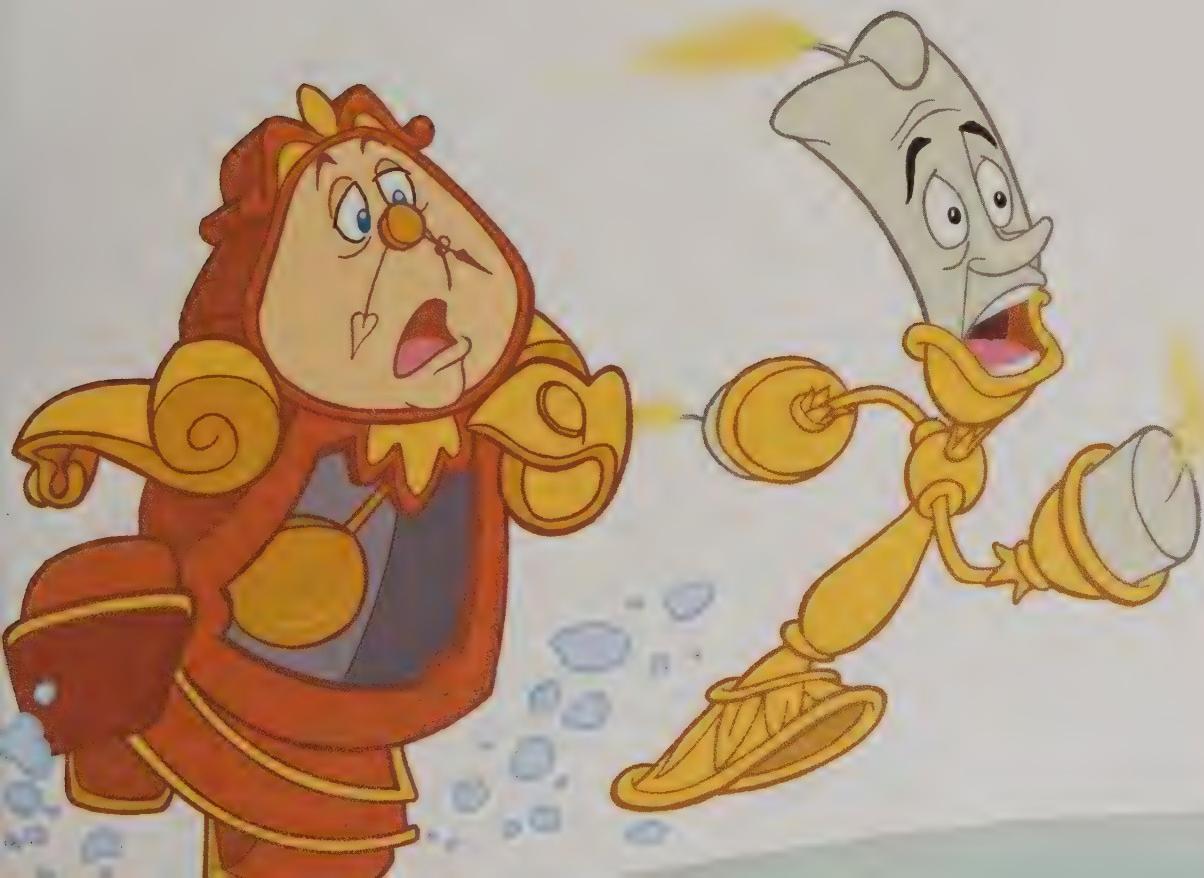
The Beast came dashing out.

Cogsworth the clock huffed and puffed along.



Lumiere the candlestick came out, melting the snow as he ran.

They all raced into the barn and stared in silence when they saw Phillippe.



“*Mon Dieu!*” exclaimed Lumiere.

“Oh, dear,” said Mrs. Potts.

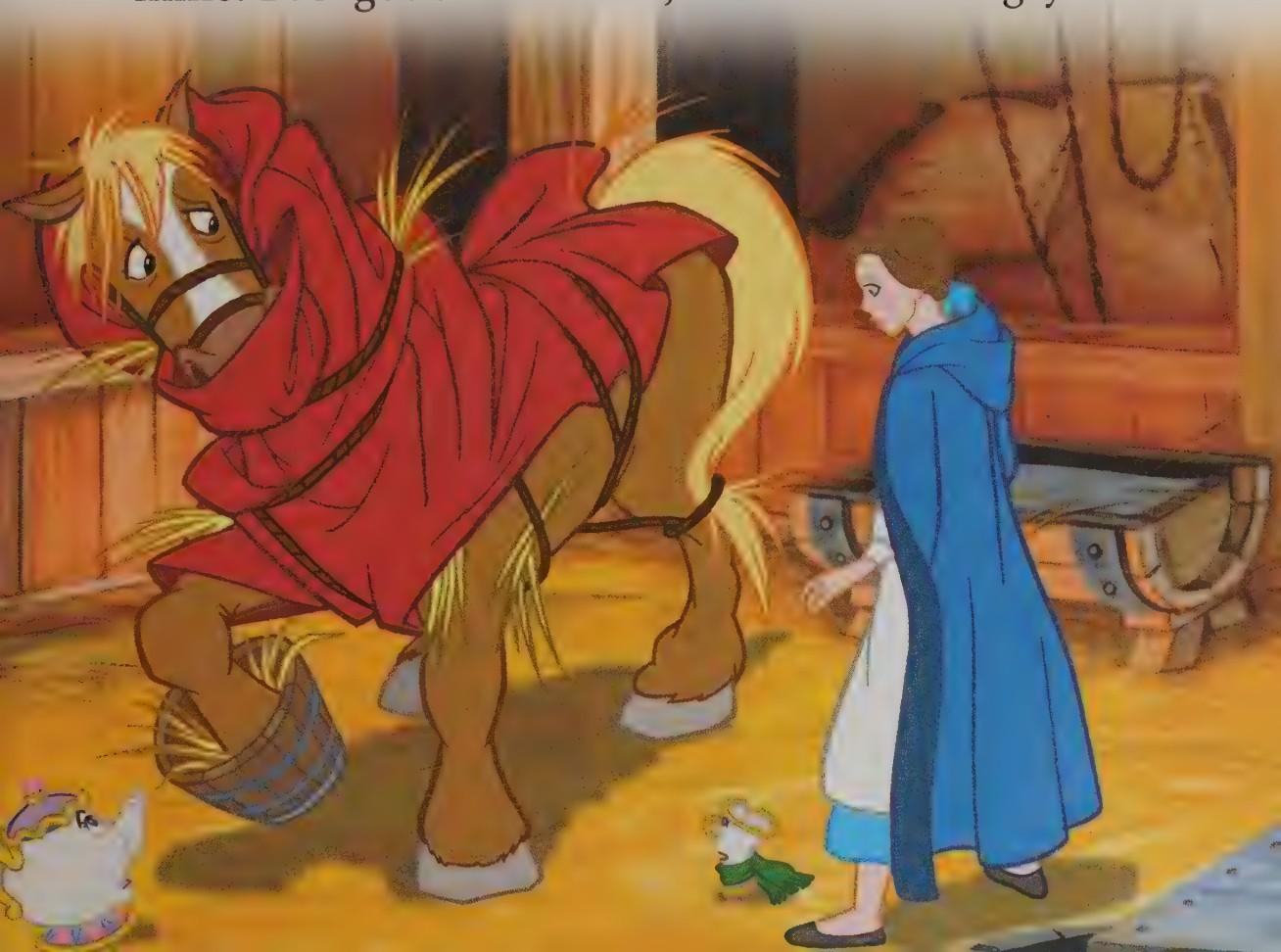
“What a predicament!” agreed Cogsworth.

“What happened?” asked the Beast.



“Phillipe wasn’t being patient,” explained Chip. “Right, Belle?”

“Yes,” agreed Belle. “But it isn’t his fault. It’s mine. I forgot to feed him, and he was hungry.”



Then everyone tried to help at once.

Soon they were all arguing about what to do.

“I’ll burn through the ropes!” shouted Lumiere.

“I’ll break them apart!” yelled the Beast.



“I’ll pour him some tea,” suggested Mrs. Potts. “The poor thing is probably thirsty.”

Everyone was in such a hurry. No one was being patient.

Soon Phillippe was more tangled than before.



Belle stepped back and watched the confusion. *What would a princess do?*

“Please!” Belle called. “Everyone stop!” The others stopped and looked at her. “Now, I want you all to count to ten,” Belle said.



“There’s no time,” Cogsworth protested.
“There’s *always* time to be patient,” Belle told him.

So they all counted to ten. Everyone seemed calmer, including Phillippe. “If you’re patient, it gives you time to make a good plan,” Belle explained.



*T*hen Belle started singing a song, and everyone joined in:

Bread must rise

And cakes must bake.

Things must take

The time they take!



*So count to ten
And when you're through,
What you've awaited
Will be waiting for you!*



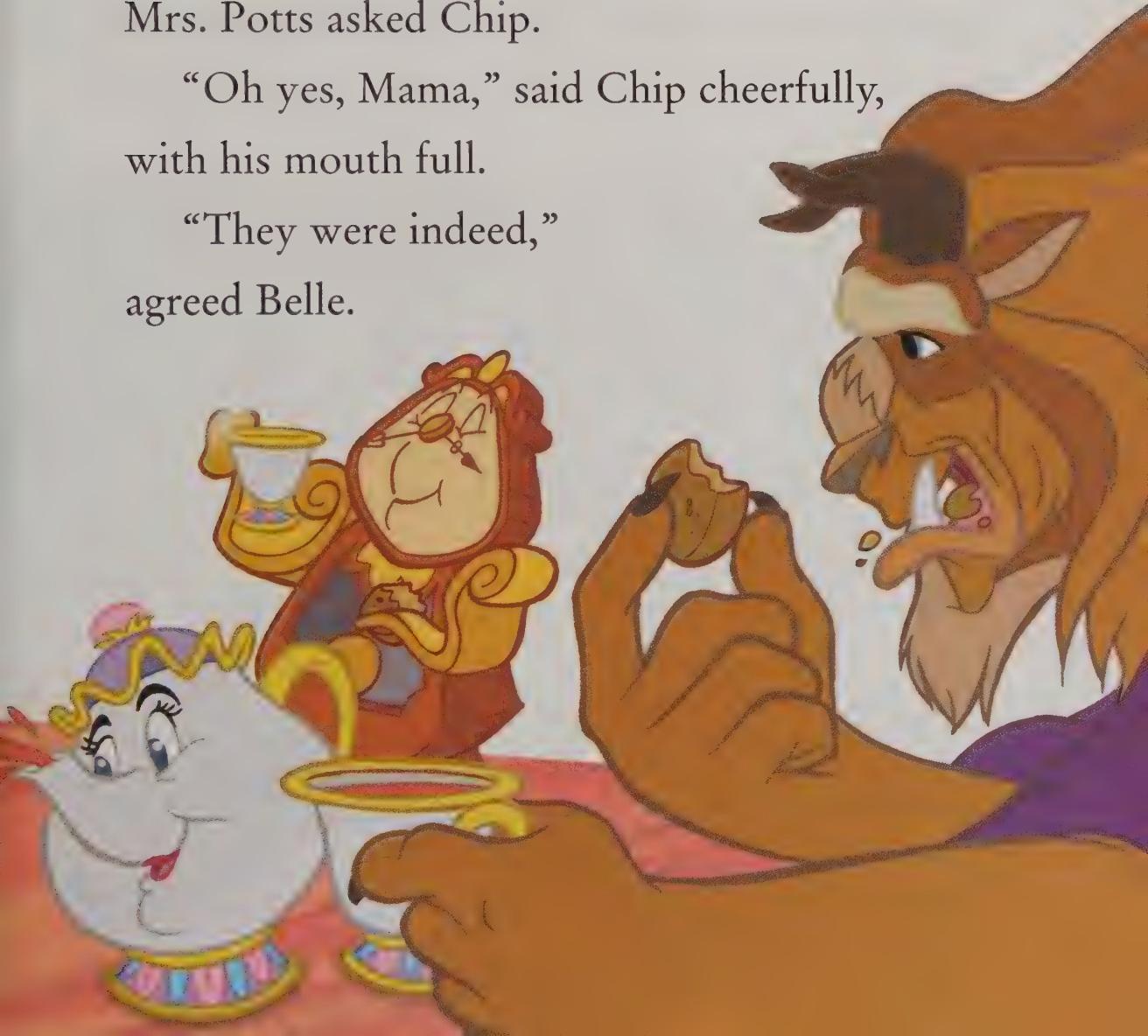
Soon Phillippe was free. They fed him hay and gave him lots of water. Then everyone went inside. Mrs. Potts served warm gingersnaps. They all munched happily.



“Now, weren’t those worth waiting for?”
Mrs. Potts asked Chip.

“Oh yes, Mama,” said Chip cheerfully,
with his mouth full.

“They were indeed,”
agreed Belle.



Later, Belle sank back down into the comfortable cushions in the library. She opened her book and began to read.



Then she reached for a gingersnap and smiled. "Having to wait for something makes it even better when it finally happens," she decided.

The End



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